

Fisheries and Oceans Canada 2017 IPHC Annual Report

Catch Limits

Fisheries and Oceans Canada follows an allocation policy that defines access to the Pacific Halibut Canadian Total Allowable Catch (CTAC) for Canadian commercial, recreational, and food, social, and ceremonial (FSC) fisheries. For 2017, the CTAC was 7,855,000 net pounds (fresh, head-off, dressed weight). The CTAC is composed of the catch limit for regulatory area 2B and an allocation for FSC. In addition to the CTAC, a carryover of quota from previous seasons is allocated to some licences.

Priority access is provided to the CTAC for FSC purposes, while commercial and recreational access is divided between the sectors 85% / 15% respectively. The International Pacific Halibut Commission recommended a 2017 catch limit of 7,450,000 net pounds for regulatory area 2B. The net carryover from 2016 to 2017 was 21,927 net pounds between the commercial and Experimental Recreational Halibut fishery pilot program (XRQ fishery). The resulting TAC for commercial and recreational harvest in 2017 was 7,389,943 net pounds¹.

Commercial and Recreational Fishery Summaries

For allocation purposes, the commercial / recreational total allowable catch (TAC) is equal to the Canadian catch limit, plus “O26” wastage mortality. The TAC is then allocated between the commercial and recreational sectors, and the “O26” wastage mortality is removed from the commercial and recreational TACs (Table 1). The combined commercial and recreational TAC, including carryover adjustments, for 2017 was 7,389,943 net pounds. As of December 11, 2017, the combined commercial and recreational halibut catch (including landed catch and mortality associated with all released fish in the commercial groundfish fisheries) was 7,168,917 net pounds.

Commercial Fishery Summary

The 2017 Canadian commercial Halibut TAC, including the catch limit allocation and carryover, was 6,271,971 net pounds. Halibut may be caught and retained by all commercial hook and line, and trap groundfish fisheries in Canada. This includes category L, K, ZN, and Schedule II licences.

¹ Quota totaling 31,803 net pounds have been set aside for treaty mitigation and as part of the Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative (PICFI). See Table 1 for more details.

In 2017 the Canadian commercial Halibut catch totalled 6,025,226 net pounds (Table 2). This catch, reported by all hook and line/trap groundfish fisheries in area 2B, includes both landed and released at-sea mortality. Given that non-halibut groundfish fisheries continue throughout the Halibut winter closure, additional released at-sea mortality will continue to be attributed to the 2017 Halibut catch until February 20, 2018, after which released at-sea mortality will be attributed to the 2018 TAC. As such the 2017 commercial catch is current as of December 11, 2017.

Commercial Integrated Management Plan

First introduced as a pilot program in 2006, the Commercial Groundfish Integration Program (CGIP) was made permanent in January 2010 to manage groundfish fisheries, including Pacific Halibut, in British Columbia. The objectives of the CGIP are to improve and maintain groundfish harvest sustainability and management through improved catch monitoring and catch accountability. The CGIP implemented individual vessel accountability for all catch, both retained and released, via individual transferable quotas which may be reallocated between licences and fisheries to cover non-directed catch. In addition these management tools are supported by 100% at-sea monitoring and 100% dockside monitoring for all groundfish vessels.

Notable management changes for the 2017 season include the ongoing rebuilding measures for Yelloweye Rockfish and Bocaccio in all commercial groundfish fisheries.

The 2018/2019 commercial groundfish fishing season will commence February 21, 2018, at which time the renewed Groundfish Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) will be available. All commercial groundfish management measures are detailed in the IFMP, which can be requested once available at: <http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/ifmp-eng.html#Groundfish>

Recreational Fishery Summary

There are two opportunities for recreational halibut fishing in area 2B, the recreational fishery, and the Experimental Recreational Halibut fishery pilot program (XRQ fishery). The 2017 recreational Halibut TAC was 1,118,029 net pounds. The XRQ fishery has acquired 11,287 net pounds, resulting in a combined recreational and XRQ fishery TAC of 1,129,316 net pounds as of December 11, 2017 (Table 3). The estimated 2017 Canadian recreational Halibut catch totalled 1,143,691 net pounds, including 5,824 net pounds of catch in the XRQ fishery. The estimation methods of the recreational catch are outlined in *2017 Canadian Recreational Fishery Halibut Catch Report*.

Management measures for the 2017 recreational fishery are summarised in the Area 2B Recreational Fishery Halibut Catch Report.

Halibut Experimental Recreational Fishery Pilot Program

The Experimental Recreational Halibut fishery pilot program allows individual anglers as well as guides, charters, lodges, marinas and other fishing experience providers to lease Halibut quota and subsequently retain Halibut that is in excess of the regular recreational fisheries daily and possession limits, and maximum size limits. An XRQ licence holder is permitted to fish for and retain Halibut from April 1 – December 31, even if the traditional recreational fishery is closed prior to December 31. Participants in the XRQ fishery must complete logbooks and submit them electronically within seven days of retaining a Halibut.

The XRQ fishery has operated as a pilot program since 2011, and was continued for a seventh season in 2017. A regulatory process is underway to create a category of annual sport fishing licence in s.17 of the *British Columbia Sport Fishing Regulations, 1996*. Public consultations about the regulatory changes were held throughout 2012/2013, and a Regulatory Impact Assessment Statement that summarizes feedback from the public meetings on the experimental licence and regulatory change has been presented to the Minister. A regulatory intent document will be presented for additional public comment prior to the proposed regulatory changes being posted in Canada Gazette 1.

The 2017 XRQ fishery has reallocated 7,455 net pounds of quota (as of December 11, 2017) from the commercial groundfish fisheries, and has carried over 3,832 net pounds of uncaught quota from the 2016 season (Table 3). Reallocations into and out of the XRQ fishery are permitted until January 31, 2018. Any uncaught quota may be reallocated back to the commercial fishery or it may be carried over into the 2018 XRQ fishery (the greater of the 200 net pounds or 10% of the total quota on the licence).

Additional details about the XRQ program are available online: <http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/commercial/ground-fond/index-eng.html>

Canadian Aquaculture Research

There were no halibut aquaculture research or production activities in area 2B for 2017.

Food, Social and Ceremonial and Treaty Fishery

The estimated Food, Social, and Ceremonial (FSC) halibut catch in area 2B is 405,000 pounds. Since 2009, new conditions have been applied to commercial Halibut licences and many communal halibut permits, to improve catch reporting of FSC caught fish on commercial trips. Of the total FSC halibut caught in 2017, approximately 51,602 net pounds were caught in conjunction with commercial fishing trips and were subject to all commercial monitoring requirements, including 100% at-sea and 100% dockside monitoring. In addition, First Nations engaging in fishing only for FSC used tools such as

catch calendars, some dockside monitoring and phone surveys to estimate their catch. Fisheries and Oceans Canada continues to work with First Nations to improve catch reporting within the FSC fisheries.

In April 2011 the Maa-nulth Final Agreement came into effect. The agreement allocates 26,000 pounds of FSC Halibut (part of the 405,000 pounds described above) plus 0.39% of the total CTAC (equivalent to 30,635 pounds in 2017) to the Maa-nulth First Nations for FSC purposes. In 2011 DFO mitigated for the additional treaty allocation through acquisition of 0.47% of the commercial TAC which is set aside for the Maa-nulth First Nation on an annual basis (identified as part of the “net reallocations into/out of the commercial fishery” in Table 1). To date, the 2017 Maa-nulth First Nation’s FSC Halibut catch totaled 39,467² net pounds of a total 56,635 net pounds allocated under the Maa-nulth Final Agreement.

Spatial Management Measures

The Government of Canada is committed to protecting 5% of Canada’s marine and coastal areas by 2017 and 10% by 2020. The 2020 target is both a domestic target (Canada’s Biodiversity Target 1) and an international target as reflected in the Convention on Biological Diversity’s Aichi Target 11 and the United Nations General Assembly’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development under Goal 14. The 2017 and 2020 targets are collectively referred to as Canada’s marine conservation targets. More information on the background and drivers for Canada’s marine conservation targets is available online at <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/conservation/index-eng.html>. To meet these targets, Canada is establishing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and “other effective area-based conservation measures” (“Other Measures”), in consultation with industry, non-governmental organizations, and other interested parties.

New and longstanding spatial management measures have been established for groundfish fisheries, including the Halibut fishery. These measures include:

- the closure of Swiftsure Bank (west of Vancouver Island and the Strait of Juan de Fuca), and areas of Haida Gwaii;
- 164 Rockfish Conservation Areas throughout the coast (<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/maps-cartes/rca-acr/index-eng.html>);
- glass sponge reefs in the Strait of Georgia (<http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/ceccsr-cerceef/closures-fermetures-eng.html>);
- Hecate Strait and Queen Charlotte Sound Glass Sponge Reefs Marine Protected Area, officially established in 2017. Further information may be found at <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/mpa-zpm/hecate-eng.html>;

² The Maa-nulth FSC catch estimate is an in-season estimate which will continue to be updated throughout the year. As such the 2017 Maa-nulth catch is current as of December 12, 2017 and is included in the 405,000 pound estimate.

- Offshore Pacific Seamounts and Vents Fishery. These areas are closed to all commercial and recreational bottom contact fisheries using bottom trawl, hook and line, and trap gear for Groundfish, Halibut, Sablefish, and Shellfish. Further information may be found at: <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/aoi-si/offshore-hauturiere-eng.html>

More information on these management measures and conservation objectives is available in the groundfish IFMP.

Tables

Table 1. Halibut allocations in 2B as of December 11, 2017. All values in net pounds.

Commercial / recreational TAC for allocation		7,716,437
Commercial allocation	x 85%	
O26 wastage	- 227,000	
2017 Underages ^A	+ 157,034	
2017 Overages ^B	- 135,107	
Net carryover	+ 21,927	
Net reallocations into/out of the commercial fishery ^C	- 22,804	
Commercial TAC		6,271,971

Recreational allocation		x 15 %
O26 wastage		- 39,437
Recreational TAC		1,118,029
XRQ allocation		x 0 %
XRQ acquired quota		+ 7,455
2016 XRQ Underages ^A	+ 3,867	
2016 XRQ Overages ^B	- 35	
Net carryover		+ 3,832
XRQ TAC ^D		11,287
Recreational and XRQ TAC ^D		1,129,316

2B commercial and recreational TAC ^D		7,389,943
2B commercial and recreational catch ^E		7,168,917

A Underage. Unfished quota equaling 10% or less of a commercial licence's individual transferable quota is carried over into the following year.

B Overage. All catch that exceeds the available quota on an individual commercial licence at the end of a given fishing season is deducted from the individual commercial licence the following season.

C Net reallocations include quota reallocated from the commercial halibut sector to Maa-nulth First Nations Treaty, the Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative (PICFI), and Allocation Transfer Program (ATP), as well as the Halibut Experimental Recreational Fishery pilot program. Of the current net reallocations, 38,988 net pounds have been set aside for treaty mitigation and as part PICFI, and are unavailable to either the commercial or recreational fisheries. This value is current as of December 11, 2017.

D There is no initial allocation provided to XRQ fishery, though quota may be transferred into the XRQ fishery from commercial Halibut fisheries. As a result the XRQ TAC changes proportionately with the commercial TAC as quota is transferred between fisheries.

E Catch includes all landed fish, as well as the mortality associated with legal-sized released fish in the commercial fishery.

Table 2. Halibut for 2B commercial groundfish fisheries as of December 11, 2017. All values in net pounds.

Commercial TAC	6,271,971
Commercial Groundfish catch	6,025,226

Table 3. Halibut for 2B recreational and the Halibut Experimental Recreational pilot program (XRQ) fisheries as of January 3, 2017. All values in net pounds.

Recreational TAC	1,118,029
Recreational catch	1,137,867
XRQ TAC	11,287
XRQ catch	5,824 ^F
Recreational and XRQ TAC ^D	1,129,316
Recreational and XRQ catch ^E	1,143,691

D There is no initial allocation provided to XRQ fishery, though quota may be transferred into the XRQ fishery from commercial Halibut fisheries. As a result the XRQ TAC changes proportionately with the commercial TAC as quota is transferred between fisheries.

E Catch includes all landed fish.

F Effective December 11, 2017.